

A LEVEL PLAYING FIELD: A Concrete Plan for Economic, Social, and Political Equity for Black Marylanders

4. Healthcare

- Though Maryland is home to nation-leading healthcare providers, far too many of our neighbors live in communities that are not just financially cut off from receiving healthcare services; they are also physically removed from service by barriers such as lack of access to transportation. The Franchot Administration will address this through a pledge to ensure by 2030, every Marylander is within a 15-minute commute of a Federally Qualified Health Center or a comparable primary care option that offers a controlled pricing structure modeled on existing community-based providers. By proactively expanding access to primary and preventive care, we can drive down our reliance on the more expensive and traumatic use of acute care in traditional hospital settings that often follows unaddressed initial health problems.
- It is impossible to separate health outcomes from environmental factors like housing and transportation, but food deserts that prevent access to proper and affordable nutrition is one of the most pressing challenges to Black communities. My administration will be committed to drastically reducing Maryland's food deserts by facilitating an expansion of farmer's markets, urban farming, community supported agriculture, and grocery providers in underserved communities via public-private partnerships and financial incentives to small businesses, particularly local Black owned businesses.
- My administration will address the financial barriers to healthcare with a multifaceted approach that builds on this emphasis on primary and preventative care by taking a stronger approach to acute care access, and driving down the cost of prescription drugs, especially for our seniors. This includes:



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- Piloting an expansion of Medicaid coverage to more Maryland residents, and incentives for more providers to serve this population;
- Piloting an expansion of Maryland's total cost of care model for the commercial insurance market to control the ever rising cost of premiums, make insurance cheaper, and get better outcomes; and
- An aggressive communications campaign that informs Medicare and Medicaid qualifying Marylanders of their eligibility, and helps inform them on how to navigate access.
- The Black community suffers disproportionately from acute illnesses that have a significant impact on quality of life and come with prolonged financial burdens. As such, the Franchot Administration will set a goal of reducing new instances of diabetes, hypertension, and asthma by 20% by 2030.
- Finally, the burden of medical debt for medically necessary procedures is one that can financially ruin families. Because Black and Brown communities experience disproportionate rates of ailments such as diabetes and heart disease, they also often experience the financial burden that comes from battling these conditions. We will protect these families from having their financial well-being upended by illness by:
 - Preventing debt recovery lawsuits that zero out the patient's bank account.
 - Preventing medical debt-related liens from being placed on any patients' primary home or car.
 - Preventing wage garnishment stemming from a family's medically-necessary procedures.